/159 cont./

756 with a considerable portion of actual experience and knowledge.

The doctors are paid for their efforts.

There are also female doctors.

[648] I have observed no sign of hostility toward Whites among these people. They know how to evade observation, however, even better than the ordinary Bushman, and that says a good deal.

Only the doctor may eat a certain kind of poisonous snake, apparently the so-called black mamba, which I regard as an older type of cobra.

U. Totemism

● 771 I was unable to observe any indications that might lead one to deduce the existence of totemism.

V. Medicine

755 A man who was suffering from headache had colored his forehead with a black grease that supposedly had curative powers and had wound a thin thong firmly around his head. Our household remedy of firmly squeezing the sides of the aching head with both hands was familiar to the Auin.

278 752 The Bushman doctor makes an antidote from the black mamba, which he alone may eat. This antidote is supposed to help against the bites of all snakes, except that of the mamba itself.

He dries and pulverizes the lungs, gall, and liver, as well as the poisonous fangs with the poison glands. This powder is stirred into a paste with the fat of the same snake, and the paste, so I was informed, is rubbed into the enlarged wound, which has first been sucked out.

At the same time, various deep incisions are made on the upper arm and chest, from which considerable blood flows.

278 Poisons that work internally are not manufactured. The Auin maintain, however, that the arrow poison also works internally.

The manufacture of arrow poison was described above.

[24 cont.]

181 He states:

181 593 "It has been asserted that the Bushmen have no feeling for one another. I have frequently heard it said that the mothers are cruel to their children and occasionally kill them when their burden becomes too great. As far as I can see, this is untrue. I have frequently seen Bushman mothers kiss their little ones, exactly as European women do, and when the children are ill, they go to all kinds of trouble. The fathers, it is true, are frequently gruff and rough, but never brutal to their children. The girls are usually seen in company with their mothers, the boys with the men. Between mother and daughter there is an intimate relationship of
181 trust. It has also been asserted that Bushmen are ungrateful; this is also quite untrue. They show their feeling of gratitude neither to one another nor to the Whites, but anyone who gains their trust through kindness can tell that they are indeed grateful. They show their gratitude not by words but by deeds. If someone is in need or in distress and a Bushman friend is in the vicinity, the latter will stay by him to the bitter end."

The !Kung Bushman in particular is much more a rational than a sentimental person. The extraordinary difficulty that he encounters in obtaining his livelihood makes him extremely independent in his thinking. It was surprising to see the sureness with [124] which not only men but women, too, were able to act as interpreters. Whereas among the Bantu it is difficult to keep the conversation on the subject, the Bushman always sticks to the point. Even the tribal traditions, insofar as superstitious conceptions are concerned, are not safe from the skepticism of the individual. For instance, I once asked a number of Bushmen whether they hunt lions. They [775 771] answered in the negative, and when I said that this was probably because the lions harbored the spirits of eminent deceased Bushmen, they laughed and said that this was just a tale of the Hei//om Bushmen and some Bushman doctors who had learned this from them. Other men of the same tribe, on the other hand, were firmly convinced that the spirits of great Bushmen doctors reside in the lions.

181 771 There are also many stories about bush spirits, especially in the Otjimpolo Veld. My informants repeatedly observed, however, that they did not know whether there was any truth in them, because They had never seen any.

[54 cont.]

756 house. The doctor then begins to pray: "Lord, help us, the chil-
789 dren are dying, we are dying of thirst and hunger." He prays and
787 begs until the captain says: "It is good, I shall send water so that
796 the children will have water and veldkost." Then the great captain again accompanies the doctor halfway down. As soon as the doctor is down below, he lets go of the thread which is immediately drawn up. Now the people dance and sing, for the rain has come:

[539] /gá-é dsó-jā /gaa — We rejoice now over the rain.
//ē gā djusă !kho ădshója /ga — Then we rejoice all together.
//ē gā hin a /gaa /gaa — Then the rain comes.
da //goă dshn !gu da adschŏéa χ'u — Then the people praise the lord.

532]

Fig. 21. Spirits of the Dead and Rain Animal (from Bleek, Rock Paintings in South Africa etc., Pl. 58).

776 Another !Kung said to me: "The great captain in the sky
821 sends the rain and all that comes from above. If he does not want to, everything remains shut up. The rain is opened up above; a great vlei is there. I do not know the name of the great captain. The Hei//om call him Som-seb."

17. Religion

771 After a critical look at the sum of the conceptions determining
177 the religious life of the !Kung, one recognizes, as would naturally be expected in the case of such an ancient people, that the elements

!KUNG

[54 cont.]

771 177 171 176 of various religions have found entry here. Among the Bushmen tribes I visited there is the common belief in a supreme good being, whose name varies. The people described here [55] call the supreme being X'u, "the lord" or "the great captain" (1). It is

[782]

1. According to Vedder, the supreme being is Huwe (Tsumeb). When the first veld fruits ripen, an offering is brought before sunrise. A freshly broken twig is inserted into a piece of wood with a hole bored through it. The people are seated in a circle, and the eldest passes around a tobacco or dacha pipe made out of a tubular bone.

the same expression that the Cape Hottentot used in speaking to the German traveler Kolbe, with the same significance and pronunciation 705 (2). The name could not have come from the !

114 171 176

2. J. Schapera (The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa, 1930) has critically referred to my observations on this point. In this connection I must note: the "great captain" among the eastern !Kung may rightfully be designated as "supreme being." I have already given his characteristics in my earlier publications.

[104] [194]

The spelling is correctly X'u. I use X' to designate a click that is even lower than "!". It is also found in other words, such as X'Ame = lion. Since not all publishers provide this character, I have sometimes been forced to write "Khu" or "Chu." This word, which the !Kung, too, translate as "lord" or "great captain," was already found, as Schapera indicates, among the Cape Hottentot in 1705 as Khourou = "Supreme Ruler" and "Great Chief" or "Great Captain"; Kolbe gives a quite analogous citation a little later, and Hahn reports of one old Nama, "The people say,

[CONTINUES ON p. 108 - ANALYST]

[55 cont.]

114 //Gaua, whose name varies, stands opposite
171 him as an antagonist who does harm to human
776 beings. Schapera believes that the original
[775] designation //Gaua stood for the spirits of the dead. This is largely correct. My researches in various places, however, show that all kinds of noncorporeal beings are understood by the term //Gaua, in other words, spirits in our sense, and immaterial forces of all kind. The great captain, of course, is regarded as actually corporeal by the !Kung. P. W. Schmidt, on the other hand, has regarded this //Gaua as the original god in heaven. A comparison of the facts of the history of religion may support this view.

114 If I understand Schapera correctly, we
776 agree that a benign high deity is indeed pres-
771 ent among the Bushmen, but one that he does not want to designate as the supreme being. I maintain, however, that this being must be so designated in accordance with general usage.

[174] The peoples of the Khoisan group, according to the evidence of the prehistoric finds, have an active history behind them; the most diverse races live on in them, and their culture in its optimal adaptation to environmental conditions is to be regarded as a residual culture. It is therefore self-evident that their world view should have a syncretistic character, especially since religious ideas are cultural elements with definite tendencies to diffuse widely. Like all human beings, the Bushmen and other primitives have thoughts that are fundamentally the same as ours.

[773] Even the Bushman has a distinct need to discover causality, but this need is felt less with regard to causal or conditional explanations for given conditions and more with regard

[55 cont.]

114 to processes. Hence, among the primitives
776 we find carefully thought out conceptions
771 concerning the origin of the world of ani-
773 mals, human beings, and plants more rarely than a clear answer to the question concerning the originator of the actual processes, that is, of rain, storms, sickness, death, and, generally, good and bad fortune in human life. This originator is conceived as either a human-like being above the clouds or ancestral spirits. The religious need or the need for protection is also generally oriented in terms of
114 these two conceptions. The greater the signifi-
771 cance accorded to the benign ancestral spirits
776 and the extent to which they can be influenced by magical practices, the smaller the significance of the heavenly being conceived as a general causa officiens. J. Schapera will doubtless agree with me whan I say that, in contrast to the Bantu, the need for a causal explanation and the religious need for protection are oriented around Thora, Huwe, /Gamab, and others, and that among the Bushmen this heavenly being therefore plays the role that we impute to a "good supreme being." By way of a critique of the Bushmen's conceptions it should be emphasized that the Bushmen, like all primitives, systematize their religious conceptions only to the extent that this is necessary for the satisfaction of their religious and causal-explanatory needs. We shall thus encounter varying degrees of consistency in the world picture from group to group, even from individual to individual, and no investigator will be able to discover a thoroughly organized system of Bushman religion since such does not exist. Whatever I could get from my

[55 cont.] WHATEVER I COULD GET FROM MY
114 individual informants I took down with the
771 exactness of a trained scientist, faithful to
776 the letter and with due regard for all pre-
[124] cautions. From these notations I have drawn the inevitable conclusion that a benign supreme being is a reality in their world picture.

776 surrounding Hei//om tribes, [56] for they use the word Somseb.
171 We should sooner think of Huwe. Huwe or Hue was what the !Kung Bushmen of Tsumeb examined by Vedder called the supreme being. I also know the expression Chuwa from the Bushmen of Ukuambi. This supreme being is conceived of in human form;
776 it looks like a Bushman and also speaks Kung. He lives in the sky
772 in a house that has two floors; his wife, whose name is unknown, lives on the lower floor, as well as many children. The souls
[775] of the deceased live on the upper floor. "The house" (it is supposed to be similar to, but not entirely like a Bushman windscreen) "is hairy on the outside, like a caterpillar." There are various things up there, but only a single house, namely, that of the captain. Honey, crickets, and fat flies are there in great abundance. The great captain lives on them. In addition, there are a great many butterflies. The following are regarded as the
776 functions of this supreme being:

1. In the opinion of some, the great captain made the sun, moon, and everything. In the opinion of others, the highest of the spirits, /Nawa, did this.

2. The great captain calls the doctors to their calling and gives them supernatural power.

3. He is the lord of the rain and the lightning.

4. Through the highest of the spirits he sends luck on the hunt or on the search for veldkost.

5. When someone thinks or speaks ill of him, he punishes
[688] him with lightning. He is not concerned about the other activities of his Bushman children, however, unless someone swears falsely.
695 The Kung have a regular oath, and one of my informants reported
776 the following to me:

When a group goes hunting and one of the participants is

[56 cont.]

695 776 not seen for the duration of the hunt, he is suspected of having sneaked away. Then he swears by the great captain nu ǂ'u, and all believe him.

776 Ordinarily, however, the great captain has everything taken care of by the highest of the spirits and lesser spirits. The chief concern of the Bushmen, therefore, is to stay in the good graces of these spirits, but the great captain does offer protection against all evil spirits, and for that reason people turn to him [762] with the following prayers in case of severe illness and before the start of a journey:

[57]

[539] ǂ'u, ǂ'u hûi mi, //kai tsao mi — Lord, Lord, help me, raise me.
to 'oba !khu !gaise ≠ani u mĩ /nāna /ge a — "the lord shall lead me well to the place,
!nore gana ti /ge a gana ti tsa /Nane /ã mi tsu (1) — where I am going, and he shall lead me back well, so that I come home safely."

1. Notation of the Dama interpreter.

[224] Before the hunt the doctors pray to the great captain for hunting luck. There is no doubt that the Bushmen conceive of this "great captain" as an all-powerful and at the same time benign being. His executive organ, as has been noted, is the highest of the Gauab. The latter is called "the Gauab" by the common people, but he has a name known only by the doctors, and saying it may have serious consequences. Since I finally [123] had the honor to be regarded as an equal by the doctors, I learned his name. He is called /Nawa. They were unable to give me an interpretation of this name, but Miss Bleek, from dance songs of the Angola Kung, reports the word /Nwa-se, supposedly an abbreviation for Nwima-se = new moon. According to this, we [174] might be able to see in this chief Gauab the high god of a lunar- [771] mythological religion which has been superimposed as a foreign element upon the primitive monotheism of the ǂ'u or Huwe faith. As is always the case in such matters, the supreme being of the invading religion has been transformed into a more or less evil [171] principle. It also functions as such in the belief of the Nama and

8: Fourie D-5 (ca. 1920) 1928
FX10 Bushmen FX10

communities are surrounded. Except among the groups which have long been in contact with and largely influenced by other races belief in a supreme being would appear not to exist. The partly disorganised ǂ*Ao-*//*ǒin* and //*Aikwe* groups of the Gobabis district believe in a good being named *!Khutse* or "God" and a bad being called *Gāua* or "Satan." About the nature, however, of these beings they have no idea nor are their lives and activities influenced to any extent by them. People who die a "good death" are said to go to *!Khutse* and those dying a "bad death" to *Gāua*. The former have a good time and live in plenty; the latter, on the other hand, often suffer hunger and distress. Among the primitive groups a deceased person is believed to move about in the form of a ghost at night. *Buchu* (*tsā*) is accordingly sprinkled over the grave to make the spirit of the departed happy so that it may not return at night to molest others; further, water is poured over or left at the grave in order that the spirit may not interfere with the rain, and the bow, quiver and arrows of the deceased placed at the graveside to obviate the necessity of his ghost returning to look for them. Every sphere of activity in life is influenced by some superstition or other which, as a rule, finds expression in certain avoidances or in ceremonial and other rites and practices. Examples of these have been given in connection with the subjects already discussed. It is unnecessary to allude to them any further.

Divination is widely practised and absolute faith is placed in the divining properties of the objects which are used for the purpose. The source from which these properties have been derived is attributed by some to their "first big Bushman," by others to *Gāua* ("satan"). Thus the Bushman *Tji-tji* is said to have been initiated by *Gāua* "on the other side" into the use of the small magic quiver. *Tji-tji* had killed a gemsbuck. *Gāua* arrived on the scene and said, "I have come to you; you need not be afraid; both of us can sleep here." After having consumed the animal and slept *Tji-tji* remarked to *Gāua*, "Give me that stuff (//*ai*)." The latter replied, "If I give you the //*ai*, what will you pay me?" *Tji-tji* answered, "I will give you the horns." *Gāua* then took the horns, made the little arrows out of them, invested them with //*ai* and before departing taught *Tji-tji* the //*ai* dance. From that time the Bushmen have known how to use magic.

In conclusion I desire to express my regret at having been unable to deal with the subject of this report in a comprehensive manner during the short time at my disposal. More detailed information on the Bushmen of this Territory is available, however, in the works mentioned in the bibliography.

15: Marshall E-5 (1951-1961) 1965
FX10 Bushmen FX10
!Kung

square miles, centered approximately at Gautscha (about 19°48'30" S, 20°34'36" E). The region lies for the most part in South West Africa, but extends into the Bechuanaland Protectorate to a number of Tswana and Herero settlements along the border. We arbitrarily call this particular stretch of country a region because it is a region in the minds of the Bushmen. In it are some 27 bands living independently in their own traditional way and 9 groups employed by the Tswana and Herero—a !Kung population of about 1000. These !Kung intermarry. They have not formally structured the region as an endogamous unit, but they remain within it by custom and preference. They know there are other !Kung-speakers living to the north and northwest of them, but consider them strangers, as they do the Auen-speaking and Naron-speaking Bushmen to the south.

ECONOMY

It is vividly apparent that among the !Kung Bushmen, ethos, or "the spirit which actuates manners and customs," is survival. Their time and energies are almost wholly given to this task, for life in their environment requires that they spend their days mainly in procuring food. The band organization is important to their survival, and, to secure the mutual support and companionship that it affords, they seek to regulate their social actions to reduce tension and potential hostility among the individuals within the band. They also strive to avoid the possibility of conflict between bands. Similarly, in their religious concepts and practices, the emphasis is on survival in this life on earth, not a looking forward to the eternal life in the sky after death.

WILD PLANT FOODS (*veldkos*) • The !Kung of the Nyae Nyae region have no agriculture. They subsist mainly on wild plant foods, which we refer to by the convenient Afrikaans word *veldkos*. The game the hunters of a band manage to kill is an important part of their diet and much desired, but it is by no means the daily sustenance. In this region the !Kung know more than a hundred different kinds of veldkos (cf. Story 1958). Several species of berries exist, dry and hard for the most part. A few fruits ripen suddenly in a short season. Leaves, resembling spinach, make a spring salad for a short time. Morsels of gums from certain trees are cherished like sweets. Tsama melons and wild cucumbers grow here but do not abound in this region as they do in some other parts of the Kalahari where some Bushman groups can live on them for certain seasons without having access to any water. Most important to the daily sustenance of the Nyae Nyae !Kung are the edible underground roots, tubers, and storage organs of certain drought-resistant plants. We observed the gathering of 23 different kinds of these; doubtless there are more. In addition to the roots and tubers, there are sev-

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date)1930
FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10

Chapter VII

RELIGION AND MAGIC

Death and Burial

771 In discussing the social customs and economic life of the Bushmen we have had occasion to note incidentally various usages and beliefs, connected for instance with puberty and especially with food, which point to the existence of some conception of supernatural agencies, and indicate how intimately religion really enters into the everyday activities of the people. The customs and beliefs associated with death afford a further insight into the religion of the Bushmen, for we meet here with their ideas of a future state as well as of spiritual beings.

539 773 [761] The origin of death is recorded in the fable of the Moon and the Hare, which is told with some variation by all the Bushman and Hottentot tribes, as well as by certain Bantu peoples. The version found among the Cape Bushmen states that the Moon once appeared to the young Hare, telling him not to cry at the death of his mother, for she was not really dead but sleeping, and would return again living, just as the Moon dies and returns again living. But the young Hare did not believe this, and continued to cry, saying that the Moon was deceiving him, whereupon the Moon, infuriated, cursed the Hare and cleft his lip. In another, more widespread, rendering the Moon instructs the Hare to deliver the following message to mankind: "As I die and return again, so shall man die and return again." The Hare distorts the message and tells the men that they will die and not return again. The Moon curses the Hare and cleaves his lip, but ever since then death has existed on earth.[1]

761 [754] There is not much information regarding the Bushman beliefs as to the actual causes of death. The Cape Bushman apparently recognized that deaths could occur purely by accident, as in the case of a wound from a poisoned arrow, the bite of a lion or leopard, starvation, etc. On the other hand, there was also a strong belief

[1] Bleek, *Bushman Texts*, 9–10; Bleek and Lloyd, *Bushman Folklore*, 56 sqq.; D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 44–51; Dornan, *Pygmies and Bushmen*, 172.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10

and make the heavens the theatre of numberless poetically-conceived histories"—in which, as the texts obtained by him show, Bushman mythology is extremely rich.[1]

The selections so far published from these texts are too few to enable us to determine anything more about the nature of the worship directed to these heavenly bodies, and especially about the ceremonies associated with them; but that such worship did actually exist is evident from the facts recorded above.

There is no mention of similar prayers among the Namib Bushmen, but then no information at all is available about their ideas relating to the heavenly bodies. Among the tribes further north we again meet with moon worship. Both Naron and Auen still worship the Moon. They regard it as an old man, the Sun as a young girl, who is his wife. First the Moon pursues the Sun across the sky, later the Sun follows the Moon. They go down to their houses below the horizon in the west, then fly back at night across the earth to their houses in the east. They can be heard passing, but are not seen. The New Moon, when it appears, is invoked by the magicians, two of whom, man and woman, sit on the ground together, holding their hands out palms upward towards it, and say: "Give us rain that we may live." This worship of the Moon has penetrated into modern ideas also, for most of the people think that since the Moon is in the sky and the God (*!khuba*) the white men and Nama speak of is also in the sky, therefore God is the Moon. Their ancestors used also to pray to certain stars, particularly the morning star and the Southern Cross; but these prayers, says Miss Bleek, are memories of long ago, whereas the moon worship is continued to-day by young as well as old.[2]

A prayer to the New Moon for food, given in the eighties of last century by a Kung youth from near Lake Ngami, is also recorded in the texts collected by Bleek and Lloyd[3]; but according to Lebzelter there is nowadays no trace at all among the Kung of either sun or moon worship. The sun is regarded as a woman, the moon as a man, who originally lived upon earth and were carried about on the shoulders of people; but the latter became tired of their burdens

[1] Bleek, "Resemblances in Bushman and Australian Mythology," *Cape Monthly Mag.*, Feb., 1874, 101–2; *idem*, *Bushman Texts*, 10–12, 15; Lloyd, *Bushman Material Collected*, 8, 22; Bleek and Lloyd, *Bushman Folklore*, 72–99 *et passim*; D. F. Bleek, "Bushman Folklore," 304, 307.
[2] *Naron*, 26–7.
[3] *Bushman Folklore*, 414–15.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
FX13 Hottentot
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or other worship directed to these bodies.[1] How far the absence of moon worship must be attributed to the fact that these Bushmen have long been exposed to Bantu influence is difficult to say. In view of the comparative evidence afforded by the other Bushman tribes, however, as well as the fact that the Hiechware have certainly been considerably influenced by the BeChwana, this seems the most reasonable suggestion; although, as already noted, Dornan cannot be regarded as a fully reliable authority.

The evidence on the whole shows quite definitely that worship of the heavenly bodies, and especially of the Moon, exists among the Bushmen. In all the instances noted, the New Moon is prayed to; in the case of the Cape Bushmen for food, although the details of the ceremony are not available, while among the Naron, Auen, and !O Kung there is a special ceremony at which it is invoked for rain. There is nothing to suggest that the Moon is conceived of as a supreme deity, or that it forms the object of an elaborate cult. At the same time the prayers and ceremonies noted clearly constitute an act of worship. They must therefore be regarded as part of the Bushman religion. The prayers and usages relating to the sun and the stars among the Cape Bushmen suggest a wider sidereal worship, which the scanty details from the Northern tribes would seem to bear out; but the worship of the Moon seems to be by far the most prominent.

Supernatural Beings

In other aspects of religion and mythology there appears to be a good deal of variation in details among the different Bushmen tribes. The most prominent figure in the mythology of the Cape Bushmen is the Mantis, round whom a whole cycle of myths has been formed. Besides his own proper name, */kaggen*, he possesses several others, as does also his wife, whose most usual name, however, is */huntu!katt!katten*, the Dassie or Rock Rabbit (*Hyrax capensis*). They have three children, a daughter, of whom there is no further mention; a son, */gaunu-ts'axau* (*/gaunu* is the name of a certain star, and *ts'axau* means "eye"), who in one of the tales is killed by baboons, and restored to life again by the Mantis; and another son, */kaggen-⊙pwa*, the young Mantis, who also figures in one of the tales, where his likeness to his father is commented upon. Besides his own children the Mantis has an adopted daughter, */xo*, the Porcupine.

[1] *Pygmies and Bushmen*, 163.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
FX13 Hottentot
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and he eats their hearts; he has forbidden people to eat the hare and the ostrich; he makes thunder and lightning; and the stars are his hearth-fire. Often he takes a star and throws it at a man, then the latter dies—a belief held in slightly different form by the Eastern Kung also, who regard a shooting star as foreboding the death of someone. Mention is further made of the "Saviour" or bringer of blessings ("Heilbringer") *Heiseb* or *Iseb*, to whom belongs the "benefactress" *Ises*, who gave the bow and arrow to mankind.[1]

The name */gamab* is also found among the Heikum of North-East Ondonga under the form *xamaba*. Here, however, Lebzelter speaks of *xamaba* as "the Supreme Being" who has made all things, including mankind, and who sends the rain. He is prayed to for rain, before a journey is undertaken, and in case of illness; he receives the souls of the dead in his house in the sky; he can be spoken to by the magicians, and he inflicts illness upon people whom he does not like. There is also an "evil spirit" *Heiseb*, "from whom comes the fire"; while in the bush there are said to be hobgoblins, */ga/ga hu*, but none of Lebzelter's informants had seen them, and their existence was doubted.[2]

In the Eastern Kalahari, again, *Huwe* and sometimes *Thora* are, according to Dornan, engaged in a contest with an "evil spirit" variously known as *Gaua*, *Khauna*, or *Gauna*. He is the destroyer, the one who sends bad luck and disease, and is ever on the look-out to injure people. The Bushmen invoke the aid of *Thora* to defeat his attempts to injure them. He sends the thunderstorm and the lightning, of which the people are very much afraid; they will mutter to themselves, *Khauna ka rue ie ie*, "Khauna leave us alone." They look upon the lightning as his offspring, nor will they kill the lightning bird or hammerkop (*Scopus umbretta*) or rob its nest if they can help it. "Once in the company of a Bushman," says Dornan, "I wanted to shoot one of these birds, but he said it would be bad, and that Khauna would not like it, so I desisted." If a person is struck by lightning, he is supposed to have got in the way of the lightning bird when trying to rob its nest. "The religion of the Kalahari Bushmen," concludes Dornan, "is thus a kind of dualism in which two powers, one good, Thora or Huwe, and one bad, Khauna, are engaged in a struggle for the mastery."[3]

The word *Gauna* (*//gauwa*), finally, crops up again among the

[1] Op. cit., 410.
[2] Op. cit., 410–11.
[3] *Pygmies and Bushmen*, 150, 153, 167–8.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
FX13 Hottentot
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Nama. Nama influence is seen also in the word *Heiseb* found among the Heikum of the Etosha Pan and of North-East Ondonga. This is one of the names applied to the mythical hero more commonly known as *Heitsi Eibib*, who figures so prominently in the religious system of the Nama. Its absence from the other Bushman tribes is clearly suggestive, although the name *Hishe* found among the Naron and Auen may possibly be a corruption of it. The various current interpretations of *//gaua* as "the evil being", "the devil" or "Satan" must likewise be dismissed as alien to native Bushman ideas. The word has been widely used by missionaries among the Nama for "Devil", and there can be little doubt that it is ultimately from this source that such interpretations have been derived.

All these direct symptoms of borrowing from other peoples show clearly that the religious conceptions of the Northern Bushmen as recorded above can by no means be regarded as untainted by foreign influences. The final interpretation of these conceptions will therefore have to take into account the religious ideas of the neighbouring peoples as well, especially of the Nama, in order that a full basis for discussion may be obtained. This is all the more necessary since the information relating to them as now held by the Bushmen is hardly sufficient to enable us to determine satisfactorily the full meaning attached to them by the people, to determine, that is, what part they really play in native life. For the moment, however, it may be of service if we attempt to reduce to some order the various accounts given by our authorities of these conceptions.

A general survey of the attributes said to be vested in the different beings figuring in the religion and mythology of the Northern Bushmen seems to show that on the whole we have to deal with two main conceptions. There is in the first place the conception known variously to the North-Western Bushmen as *Huwe*, *Xu*, *Xuwa*, *Hishe*, or *Erob*, and to the North-Eastern Bushmen as *Thora* or *Huwe*. By Lebzelter, whose account cannot be entirely freed from a suspicion of prejudice in favour of the monotheistic doctrine associated with the name of Pater W. Schmidt and his school of disciples, *Xu* or *Erob* is spoken of as an anthropomorphic "supreme good being" dwelling in a house in the sky, where he receives the souls of the dead. He is regarded as the creator; he controls the rain and its associated phenomena of thunder and lightning, and punishes evil-doers with lightning; he sends good fortune in hunting and in the collection of veldkos, is prayed to before and after hunting, and is

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
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turned back with cattle and all to the BeChwana, by whom they were murdered with assegais."[1] A thoroughly convincing proof!

Appendix

Comparative Note on Bushmen and Hottentot Religion

The analysis given above of Hottentot religious conceptions shows that in many respects they bear a striking resemblance to those of the Bushmen, although there are also considerable differences. Both peoples worship the Moon. The Southern Bushmen also have prayers to the sun and to various stars, which the Hottentots and most of the Northern Bushmen have not, but even here the worship of the Moon is far more developed than that of the other celestial bodies. This common feature is all the more significant since none of the Bantu peoples of South Africa pray to the Moon.

Neither Bushmen nor Hottentots, again, have any organized family or tribal ancestor worship, nor any form of religious practice in which the spirits of the dead are regularly invoked or propitiated, although among the Southern Bushmen as well as among the Hottentots dead people are occasionally prayed to. In the beliefs of both peoples the dead are in some way connected with the stars, but it is held above all that dead people become mischievous ghosts, which in particular are the cause of sickness and death. Both the Northern Bushmen and the Hottentots use some form of the word *//gaua* for these ghosts, although the Hottentots customarily speak of them as */hei /nun* and by certain other names as well. Among both peoples, moreover, the magicians are somehow in special contact with the ghosts, and consequently have the power to cure the illness caused by them. Certain of the North-Western Bushmen, however, believe also that the soul of a dead person, as distinguished from his ghost, goes to live with the being *Huwe* in a house in the sky, while the Southern Bushmen likewise speak of an afterworld to which dead people go, without, however, associating this afterworld with any supernatural being. These beliefs are apparently not found at all among the Hottentots.

Both the Northern Bushmen and the Hottentots further use the word *//Gaua* as the name of a definitely personified being, closely connected with the ghosts of the dead. But here there is also a difference. The Hottentots regard *//Gaunab* primarily as an evil being,

[1] Op. cit., 122.

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who causes sickness or death. The Northern Bushmen likewise believe that he causes death, but do not seem to attach any special significance of evil to him, save where there has been Hottentot influence. He is associated by them more particularly with certain phenomena of nature, such as thunder and lightning, shooting stars, the wind, etc., so that Miss Bleek actually regards him as a personification of the wind and the storm, while Pater Schmidt looks upon him as an ancient sky god ("Himmelsgott").[1] Closer analysis shows, however, that the phenomena of nature regarded as manifestations of *//Gaua* by the Northern Bushmen are all looked upon primarily as mediums through which he inflicts misfortune and death; and similarly we find that among the Hottentots the whirlwind, the eclipse of the moon and the sun, the rainbow and the Aurora australis are all natural phenomena of ill omen specially connected with *//Gaunab*. Since the lightning is actually a frequent cause of death, while the other phenomena, such as comets, shooting stars and eclipses, are owing to their very nature readily regarded as ominous, it is perhaps not far-fetched to see in this the reason why they should have become specially connected with *//Gaua*, the cause of sickness and death.

The impression one gets, reviewing the evidence as a whole, is that among both the Hottentots and the Northern Bushmen the term *//Gaua* has several different references, which, however, are not consistently distinguished by the people themselves. Sometimes it is used for the ghost of a dead person, sometimes as a collective name for these ghosts, sometimes, again, in the sense of a personified being with various special attributes. The beliefs regarding *//Gaua*, in other words, are not crystallized into clear-cut conceptions, but are vague, inconsistent, and ambiguous. Consequently those interpretations based solely upon the conception of *//Gaua* as a personified being must be rejected as one-sided and obviously inadequate. If any special interpretation is to be sought, and in the light of our present knowledge there is none which can be advanced with full confidence, the most fruitful approach would seem to be that *//Gaua* must be regarded as a vague conception founded upon the beliefs about the fate of the dead and the ways in which the latter can affect the living society.

//Gaunab in Hottentot mythology is in conflict with *Tsui //Goab*, the creator, the guardian of health, the source of prosperity and

[1] D. F. Bleek, "Bushmen of Central Angola," 124; W. Schmidt, "Die alte Buschmann-Religion," 295.

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abundance, and above all the controller of the rain and its associated phenomena of clouds, thunder, and lightning. *Tsui //Goab* appears to be essentially the personification of the natural forces producing the rain, and as the rain god he is the object of a special cult. In all this he resembles closely the being variously known as *Huwe*, *Hishe*, *Erob* or *Thora* by the Northern Bushmen, and as *Cagn*, the Mantis, by the Bushmen of Basutoland. *Huwe*, too, is the creator, he controls the rain, thunder, and lightning, he is the source of abundance and of good luck in hunting, the protector of his people from illness and danger, and to him are directed the ceremonies and prayers for rain, food, recovery from illness, etc.

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But among certain of the North-Western Bushmen *Huwe* also dwells in a house in the sky where he receives the souls of the dead. This belief is apparently not found at all among the Hottentots, nor has it been recorded of the other Bushman tribes. It is also held, however, in what appears to be a far more elaborate form, by the Bergdama. Among this people we meet with the conception of *//Gamab*, whose name Vedder derives from the root *//gami*, " water, " and whom he regards as " originally the god of the rising clouds and of thunder and fountains ". *//Gamab* is the only supernatural being of whom the Bergdama speak. He is the source of life and death, abundance of food, etc., and he lives in " heaven " in a village where he gathers about him the souls of the departed. The Bergdama trace out in great detail the movements of the soul from the moment of death till its arrival in *//Gamab's* village, and the life led there is minutely described.[1] In view of the fact that this particular series of beliefs and its associated rites appear to be the central feature of Bergdama religion, are entirely absent from the Hottentots, and occur in a much-attenuated form only among certain North-Western Bushman tribes who have been much in contact with the Bergdama, one feels justified in assuming that the connection of *Huwe* with a " sky dwelling " to which go the souls of the deceased can be definitely attributed to Bergdama influence.

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Among the North-Western Bushmen *Huwe* also figures in the boys' puberty ceremonies, whereas among the Hottentots neither *Tsui //Goab* nor any other supernatural being is in any way connected with these ceremonies. Here we have an important distinction, and one which must further be correlated with the fact that the Southern Bushmen do not appear to have any puberty ceremonies at all for

[1] Vedder, *Die Bergdama*, i, 97 sqq. ; *idem*, " The Berg Damara," 61 sqq.

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boys. This particular association, in other words, is peculiar to the North-Western Bushmen; but whether it has been borrowed or is simply a local development cannot be decided in the light of our present knowledge.

Finally, the Hottentots speak also of *Heitsi Eibib*, who seems to be a sort of ancestral hero, and who is worshipped at his "graves", where he is prayed to for success in hunting, etc. His mythological character in certain respects resembles that of the Mantis among the Cape Bushmen, but the latter is not the object of a grave cult, and this *Heitsi Eibib* primarily is. There is no being corresponding to him among the Northern Bushmen, although his name occurs, obviously as a borrowed element, in the *Heiseb* of the Heikum of Etosha Pan and of North-East Ondonga (among the former as that of a "bringer of blessings", among the latter as that of an "evil spirit"!), and possibly also in the *Hishe*, i.e. *Huwe*, of the Naron and Auen. Consequently this conception must be regarded as peculiar to the Hottentots.

The resemblances noted above are far-reaching, even when allowance is made for the by no means insignificant differences in detail. The Northern Bushmen especially seem to have many elements of religious belief virtually identical with those of the Hottentots. There has certainly been a good deal of mutual influence here, but the similarities not so much in detail as in general features are too numerous and too fundamental to be attributed solely to borrowing. Meticulous comparison must unfortunately be ruled out as at present inadvisable: we know far more about the religious system of the Hottentots than we do about that of the Bushmen, of which indeed the available information is so scanty that any elaborate discussion based on it can only be regarded as somewhat speculative. It can nevertheless be fairly confidently asserted that among both the Northern Bushmen and the Hottentots we find, in addition to the worship of the moon, the cult of mythical beings derived partly from animistic beliefs (*//Gaua*), and partly from the personification of the natural forces producing rain (*Tsui //Goab*, *Huwe*). It must be concluded therefore that both peoples have on the whole the same religious system, although there are obviously also considerable differences in detail which still have to be explained. The importance attaching to this community of beliefs is emphasized by the fact that this religious system differs essentially from that of the neighbouring Bantu.

The Southern Bushmen to some extent stand apart from the rest.

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They share with their Northern relatives and with the Hottentots the cult of the moon and several beliefs concerning the dead and natural phenomena, and the conception of the Mantis among the Basutoland Bushmen can possibly be linked up with that of *Huwe* among the Northern tribes. But the beliefs centring in the Mantis among the Cape Bushmen have no parallel further north, nor, on the other hand, do they seem to have anything exactly corresponding to either *Huwe* or *//Gaua*. Their mythology, again, is far more elaborate than that of the Hottentots, which in turn is more developed than that of the Northern Bushmen. Underlying these superficial, but unquestionably significant, differences, there is of course a great deal of fundamental similarity, as we have had occasion to note in our discussion of Bushman religion. As far as present indications go, it seems evident that while we can safely speak of one religious system common to all the Bushmen and Hottentots, we must also distinguish between the Southern Bushmen on the one hand and the Northern Bushmen and Hottentots on the other, and that a further distinction must be made in certain respects between the two latter. A good deal of further research in the field is still necessary, however, before we can finally disentangle borrowed elements from specifically local developments. The fact still remains that no really satisfactory account is available of the religion of any single Bushman tribe or of the Hottentots.